

## Sunday, Dec 30, 2018

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

### Resume the conversation

It happens all the time: The younger generation departs from traditional ways, while the older one wrings its hands and predicts the end of the world. The kids are abandoning our values, mistrusting our institutions, taking terrible risks, and setting out in a dark direction! Without a doubt, the turnover of each generation is the end of “a” world—that is, the one the rest of us knew, built, and got comfortable in. Each family has to keep the lines of communications open, so that wisdom gets passed on and change becomes less scary. Holy families keep the conversation going.

TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 or 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28; Colossians 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24; Luke 2:41-52 (17). “*Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?*”

## Monday, Dec 31, 2018

MEMORIAL OF SYLVESTER I, POPE

### Old friends remembered

On New Year’s Eve, tradition has us questioning, rhetorically, whether old friends should be forgotten, but that goes against the grain for Catholics who try as a community to preserve the memory of those who have served the Lord with distinction. Some, like Pope Sylvester I, have rather sparse legacies—which is surprising for one of our longest reigning popes (314-335). But we do know that he enjoyed the Roman emperor Constantine’s favor and was able to expand the church’s influence and dedicate many churches, including the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome. Take time to consider your own legacy of faith today, and then raise a glass for all the forgotten Christians who put their faith into practice in each generation.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:18-21; John 1:1-18 (204). “*All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.*”

## Tuesday, Jan 01, 2019

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, HOLY MOTHER OF GOD / OCTAVE DAY OF THE NATIVITY

### Make a free and fresh beginning

Turning a new page on the calendar always invites a fresh perspective—even more so when it’s a brand-new calendar! So lose your chains. You’re invited today to let go of the old year, both “what we have done” and “what we have failed to do.” Time to give and receive pardon for offenses. Time to craft resolutions and adopt new habits. Time to become people of justice and peace. On this eighth and final day of Christmas, accept the gift of your true identity: a free child of God, heir to a land of relentless hope.

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21 (18). “*You are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.*”

## Wednesday, Jan 02, 2019

MEMORIAL OF BASIL THE GREAT AND GREGORY NAZIANZUS, BISHOPS, DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH

### Let your light shine

“God . . . wants you to become . . . lights shining in the world. You are to be radiant lights as you stand beside Christ, the great light, bathed in the glory of him who is the light of heaven,” wrote Saint Gregory Nazianzus (329-c. 390), the monk who was an

Emily Dickinson of the early church—happiest in seclusion writing poetry and theology on the love of God. But his lifelong friend and fellow monk, Saint Basil the Great (c. 329-379), was more active than contemplative, talking Gregory into becoming a bishop to help fight heresy. Gregory wasn’t cut out for leadership, however. He resigned, resenting Basil for not seeing his true talents. Do we let our own light shine as brightly as it could?

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:22-28; John 1:19-28 (205). “*I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one coming after me.*”

## Thursday, Jan 03, 2019

MEMORIAL OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS

### What’s in a name?

How you talk about someone by name shows the regard—or lack of it—you have for them. God gave the Israelites the commandment: “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.” Honoring the name of God, though, means more than not using it casually. It also involves showing respect for the One the name represents. That there is a feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus should come as no surprise. Devotion to Jesus’ name goes back many centuries, and the Franciscan saints Bernardine of Siena and John of Capistrano helped to make it popular. Honoring the name honors Jesus the person and his presence in your everyday life.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:29—3:6; John 1:29-34 (206). “*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.*”

## Friday, Jan 04, 2019

MEMORIAL OF ELIZABETH ANN SETON, RELIGIOUS

### Losing leads to finding

Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821) was canonized in 1975, the first U.S.-born person to be so. Her life was relatively short and filled with more than its share of grief and loss. Always a deeply religious woman, her losses deepened her faith and motivated her to convert to Catholicism as an adult. This was a rather dramatic step to take in early American society, where Protestant-Catholic relations were not all that positive, to put it mildly. Sometimes our life experiences lead us to take actions of which others will disapprove. If we are motivated by charitable love and compassion, however, our inner voice will guide us to make the right decisions, whether we gain the approval of others or not.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 3:7-10; John 1:35-42 (207). “*When Jesus turned and saw them following him, he asked, ‘What are you looking for?’*”

## Saturday, Jan 05, 2019

MEMORIAL OF JOHN NEUMANN, BISHOP

### Striving for greatness

English wasn’t a second language for John Neumann (1811-60), it was a seventh or eighth. Along with his native Slovak, he mastered at least six more European languages. As if that weren’t enough, when he was bishop of Philadelphia, he saw how Irish immigrants struggled with American English, so he learned Gaelic to help them out. Lots of new arrivals to America have trouble with English. Wouldn’t it be saintly if we, like John Neumann, worked to learn a new language so we could help? Greatness, Jesus reminds us, is about serving those in need. ¡*Qué bueno!*

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 3:11-21; John 1:43-51 (208). “*Jesus said to Nathaniel, ‘You will see greater things than these.’*”

*Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time*



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